

NARRATOR: Bud Filler
INTERVIEWER: Troy Reeves
DATE: February 3, 2000
LOCATION: Boise, Idaho
PROJECT: Smokejumpers/Forest Fire Fighting

Tape Counter	Page Number	Summary
000		Introduction.
010		Filler grew up in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Filler's father worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Filler showed an interest in forestry and read about smokejumping in magazines. Dr. Maurice Goodard, who was the Dean of the School of Forestry at Penn State University, told Filler to contact Jack Kooch, who worked for the Payette National Forest. Filler got the job.
040		Filler's family had a cottage in the mountains of Pennsylvania, which led to his interest in forestry. Filler talked about the Appalachian Mountain Range, which runs through Pennsylvania. Filler just liked forests. He talked about his wages while jumping on fires.
070		Filler talked about the food that he could carry onto a fire and also the food he ate while at the smokejumper base. He thought the cooks at the camp were great.
100		Filler mentioned the equipment that jumpers took onto a fire. They rarely used chainsaws. It was all manual labor to fight fires in the early 1950s. The cargo, including equipment, was dropped separately after the jumpers landed.
130		Filler was a smokejumper for three years, and he worked as a forester for one summer at McCall. He talked about some of his more memorable jumps, including one on the middle fork of the Salmon River with Bill Yensen.
165		Sometimes jumpers landed in trees intentionally. Filler told Reeves why jumpers would do that. He also mentioned how jumpers would get down from the trees and how they would get their parachutes out from the trees. Filler never was injured during jumping.

- 200 Filler wrote a book that he called *Two-Man Stick: Memoirs of a Smokejumper*. He talked about the book and how and why he wrote it. Filler also gave his opinions about why smokejumpers stay in touch. He compared it to a brotherhood. He mentioned names of people who he kept in touch with over the years.
- 265 Filler thought all the stories told by smokejumpers are true. He could not put all the stories in the book, because smokejumpers told him numerous stories about their experiences. He mentioned a story in the book about a Native American who died fighting a fire. Filler was a forester, and he brought a mule in to pack the dead man out from the fire. This story in the book has led to numerous letters received by Filler.
- 420 Filler talked about packing the equipment out after the fire was extinguished. Either the smokejumpers packed their own stuff out or a pack stringer came in to carry the equipment out. He once hauled his gear about twelve miles near Warren, Idaho.
- 495 **END OF SIDE ONE**
TAPE ONE SIDE TWO
- 000 Filler talked about the Mann Gulch fire in Montana in 1949. He said that they talked about that fire during his training in McCall. While in college Filler wrote a story about the Mann Gulch fire. His teacher sent it to several outdoor magazines; one magazine published it and gave Filler \$100.
- 025 Filler discussed the physical training involved in smokejumping. He felt that smokejumpers had to be in pretty good shape. He also mentioned the "torture rack," that was a piece of equipment, made from wood, that strengthens the stomach muscles.
- 070 Besides physical training the McCall camp leaders taught classes about fighting fires and the science of fire. He talked about how smokejumpers would fight fire at night, when they were easier to control.
- 110 Smokejumpers stayed around McCall and played during their days off. Filler also talked about McCall during the

1950s. He also mentioned some fights that smokejumpers got into with others.

150 Filler discussed his lack of fear during a fire. He thought fire was not difficult or scary if you used what you learned.

175 Filler talked about how fires were fought in the 1950s and how fires are fought today. He also gave his opinion on prescribed burning in the forest.

255 Filler mentioned the Storm King fire in 1994 in Colorado. They compared the communication break down between the Storm King fire and the Mann Gulch fire. Filler said that smokejumpers in McCall were told never to light backfires.

325 Filler thought that female smokejumpers are great, as long as they can do the physical work.

345 Filler mentioned the other jobs smokejumpers would do when they did not fight fires. He then discussed the procedures smokejumpers would follow from the time they were called on a fire until they returned to camp.

495 **END OF TAPE ONE**
TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

000 [There is no introduction on the second tape.] Filler finished his comments about the steps involving in fighting a fire from the initial call to returning to camp. Some years Filler would finish one fire, clean up, and immediately jump onto another fire.

030 Filler talked about two recently deceased smokejumpers, Wayne Webb and "Paperlegs" Peterson. Both jumpers left lasting impressions with Filler, particularly Peterson. He talked about *Static Line*, which is a smokejumper journal. The most recent issue had an article about Peterson.

065 Filler described the buildings in the old smokejumper camp in McCall. The group was tight-knit, certain types of people did not return to jump the next year. The people that remained became really close.

085 Filler talked about what things he took from being a smokejumper. He mentioned a risk-taking mindset that smokejumpers have. It has helped him in his own business.

105 Filler gave a brief biography of his life after smokejumping. He served in the army, got a master's degree, and worked in logging on the Clearwater River. He worked for Boise Cascade in sales and marketing for over twenty years. He and another forester, Wayne King, started a company in Homedale, Idaho. They manufacture wood products, such as beams for building and material for making decks. They also have a lumberyard there. They (Filler and his family) have lived in Portland, Oregon, and Chicago, Illinois, for brief periods of time. Other than that they have resided in Idaho.

135 He concluded with his thoughts about how current political pressures dictate how fires are fought today.

145 **END OF SIDE ONE**
END OF INTERVIEW

NAMES AND PLACES INDEX

Altoona, Pennsylvania
Bertram, Bus
Blue Lake, Idaho (lake north of McCall)
Boise Cascade Corporation
Catlin, Del
Cold Meadows, Idaho
Dodge, Wag
Donnelly, Bob
Gabiola, James
Goddard, Maurice
Hawley, Clyde
Homedale, Idaho
Horn, Dub
Jackson, Reid
Kooch, Jack
Mann Gulch fire (Montana)
McCall, Idaho
Park, Lonnie
Payette National Forest
Payette River
Peterson, Richard "Paperlegs"
Roselli, Carl
Salmon River
Static Line (Journal)
Storm King fire (Colorado)
Two-Man Stick: Memoirs of a Smokejumper
Warren, Idaho
Webb, Wayne
Yensen, Bill